

# JOSEPH G. CANNON POSES AS A "DIZZY RADICAL"

By Victor Murdock, Representative in Congress From the Eighth Congressional District of Kansas .....

Victor Murdock, a republican member of congress from Kansas, has written for the New York World a fine piece of satire. It relates directly to Joseph G. Cannon, the reform and reformed speaker of the house of representatives.

Incidentally a brief introduction of Mr. Murdock may be advantageous for, by this, the reader will know that Mr. Murdock is peculiarly qualified to write upon Cannon and Cannonism.

The August number of the American Magazine printed an article entitled "A Congressman's First Speech." This article was written by Mr. Murdock. A preface to the article was written by Mr. Murdock's friend, William Allen White. Mr. White's article follows:

"Victor Murdock went to congress in his early thirties, five years ago, determined to be a free man. His first public act of any importance was to bring to the attention of congress the fact that the American railroads were getting five million dollars a year from the government by a false system of railroad mail weighing. Congress refused to act. Murdock, who was refused the right to vote on the subject, appealed from the decision of the chair to the house; he was the only republican who stood up to be counted. The steal—which was open and palpable—was so gross that the president, after waiting in vain for congress to act on Murdock's proposition, abolished the rule under which the steal was made the day that congress adjourned. Murdock thus incurred the enmity of the house organization, but he found favor with the president. Last spring Murdock led the fight for a detailed consideration of the postal appropriation bill in the house. He said in the course of his speech:

"This bill carries two hundred millions. There are twenty minutes allowed for its analysis. That is deliberation at the rate of ten millions a minute." Mr. Murdock then denounced the extravagance of congress in dealing with the railroads. "During the past thirty-four years," he asserted, "by reason of congressional blindness and departmental silence we have paid the railroads on miscalculations sixty million dollars. Still congress refuses to adopt business methods in dealing with the railroads."

"This angered the organization again. Murdock also stood against the 'organization' in its attempt to garrot the democratic minority. Three times the clerk called Murdock's name when this rule came to a vote, and three times did Murdock—the only republican—reply 'no.' He could not be bulldozed, and when signatures were needed to a petition to the republican caucus for any insurgent movement, Murdock's name always went down."

## VICTOR MURDOCK'S SATIRE

Mr. Murdock's article, printed in the New York World, was as follows:

Washington, November 29.—Carnegie did not begin it, but of all the color added to the present situation in Washington, Carnegie has brought the nearest combination to a Japanese sunset yet produced. It may not prove to be the most brilliant mixture, however. Your Uncle Joe is approaching the canvas with an air of abandon and a palette which in pigment scheme resembles a test tube showing the effect of pepsin after three hours on lobster, Welsh rabbit and spinach. There are seismic vibrations in the vicinity of Joseph G. Cannon which indicate it.

John D. Rockefeller was really the first man to bring disorder to the gray tapestry of our national prospect when a month ago he uttered his famous indictment of men who live for wealth alone. For whatever the rest of the country may think of the most notable of our landscape gardeners, who picked up incidentally a competence in oil, there has been a secret though precious belief in Washington that Rockefeller's real worth, as Shakespeare's, would come out two hundred years after death, and that with his ultimate canonization, avarice would be introduced into good society as a sister in equal standing with virtue and valor.

That was the first rude shock. Then Andrew Carnegie climbed aboard the Protection Limited and quarrelled with the conductor. Carnegie has never been commonplace, but when he boarded the train with the steel trust and insisted on paying full fare for the child, Washington lost all patience. The conductor was

willing to carry the steel trust half fare, in fact by long training had come to complete conviction that the infant was permanently just under twelve and stood ready to convince Carnegie himself that he didn't know a baby when he reared one. And for Carnegie to stand there and belligerently confess that the cute little thing was past thirteen and had been playing fullback on the international eleven for several seasons was a violation of every conventional sense of decency that economic Washington has had in forty years.

## UNCLE JOE WIDE AWAKE

Just at this moment, too, the president of the Amalgamated Order of Tobacco Leaf Producers, of Tariffville, Conn., was proving to the ways and means committee that there was no competition with the Sumatra leaf because the American weed was superior, and, with that refinement only possible in the human intellect when it grapples with the tariff problem, that therefore the duty on the domestic wrapper should be increased to protect it. And only a moment before the spokesman for the American manufacturers of Advalorem, Pa., had testified that a surplus at home was a domestic calamity and a foreign philanthropy. In other words, things were moving along about as usual when Andrew Carnegie dismissed the stage manager, gagged the prompter and plunged into the spotlight himself.

Rockefeller was theatric. His outbreak may have been merely a weakness for homily. Carnegie's paroxysm was dramatic. It was invested with specific horror and seemed to have a plot.

Now, all this has not escaped your Uncle Joe, speaker of the house. If this is to be an era of spectacular work he may show the country something. He is master of the representative portion of the government. His office entitles him to a seat next the president at table, while supreme court justices and the like must look in envy to the sacred territory above the salt and the ketchup bottle.

Uncle Joe enjoys life in Washington. He has enjoyed it since the day he left Danville, back in 1874, when, with fading visions of a cow to be milked and horses to be fed at dawn's early light, he looked into the eyes of a Washington hotel clerk and received in gladness the sybaritic assurance that guests would be breakfasted as late as high noon. It looked good to him then, and since he has consistently stood pat. He has been the Grand Lama of all the stand-patters. Only the accident of birth and time kept him from being a friend to the rush-light and the latch string. An eager world, under the spur of discontent, groping into the dark of the bountiful future and ambitiously clutching at new things, had forgotten them before he was born. Else he would have protested against their elimination. At the caucus on Creation he would have stood loyal to Chaos. It is in his heart to approve things as they are, to burn incense at the altar of Status Quo and level a lance always at Change.

Howe had slipped the needle's eye down a notch or two; Stephenson had mounted a steam cylinder on a T rail and McCormick had turned a pair of elongated scissors loose in the wheat field by the time Uncle Joe arrived, and he has stood by them loyally ever since. They got his friendship by beating him here. Of course, humanity has had some travail in assimilating them, but your Uncle Joe's worry over the problems they brought with them has always been lost in the blazing sunlight of his great, glad approval of the fact that we have them at all.

He has been speaker now for nearly six years. He found the speakership the sole repository of responsible party leadership in the house. He patted it about and kneaded it and moulded it into shape, until now it is also the repository of personal power as well as political, and as master of both majority and minority he has created an atmosphere of reserve and conservatism that would strangle a Manchu mandarin. The basic philosophy of the present rules of the house, under his interpretation, is that the house is so large that it must be protected from itself. If left unhampered, the house, in its efforts to be representative, might, in some way, actually respond to public sentiment. It was, then, in the spirit of philan-

thropy that he rushed in between 319 men and themselves and saved them.

Yet there has been criticism. It has been severe. He has felt it. He believes it to be unjust, but he recognizes that here and there, as in the case of the man in Oklahoma who declared that, while he was not religious himself, he would have to vote against Taft because Taft was a vegetarian, it has lost some votes.

There is opposition to your Uncle Joe; there is opposition to the garrote rules of the house, and now comes a disposition to tangle the revision of the tariff up in the complication.

Your Uncle Joe has been a standpatter on the tariff. In the course of years he has become an expert on the schedules. In his first term he may have had an idea that the best thing to do with our raw material was to cook it, as the boy in Dickens' story thought, but for many years he has had a knowledge of the schedules running from the item of pyronitrochlorobenzol to coil chains. And he has believed in letting them alone.

But the demand has come for revision, and the demand is for a downward revision. There is a knowledge in congress that "revision" is derived from two Latin words, signifying "to see" and "again," and there is a feeling in congress that the people will see congress later if that revision isn't downward in several notable instances, as in steel and lumber. Coupled with this consciousness is the apprehension that the tariff may be brought into the house under some special rule, or under a suspension of the rules without the right of amendment, or that certain sacred sections may be saved from the violating hands of a barbarian house by placing the said sections in the hands of a clerk to be inserted in the bill after its engrossment and passage, which can be done under the practices of the house under rule twenty-eight, as is duly recorded in the precedents of parliamentary procedure.

And right here is where your Uncle Joe may get into action. Rockefeller has flipped. Carnegie has flopped. Your Uncle Joe may outdo them both and, turning from a long record of standpattism, blaze suddenly forth into a dizzy, dazzling radical.

There are signs in the sky and subterranean murmurings. For thirty years, following the unbroken rule of all conservatives, your Uncle Joe has given his newspaper interviews off-hand. The other day, in the manner of all radicals, he gave out a typewritten statement and barred the door to all interrogations thereafter. As between a downward revision and an upward revision, he was specifically and in terms for a revision.

Is this premonitory? Is he to stand for a downward revision? Is he to turn to the house and ask it to choose for itself that autocratic group known as the committee on rules, to which the house surrenders its procedure first and itself afterward? Is your Uncle Joe, grown weary of power, to turn it back to the house, where under the constitution, it belongs? Is he about to restore to the individual on the floor the right of initiative and the high privilege of recognition without the humiliating necessity of first arranging for it, hat in hand, at a private interview in the speaker's chambers?

Is he about to pass the word out among the chairmen of committees that independence among the members of the committee, and not blind subserviency to the chairman, will hereafter meet with fitting reward? Is he about to demand that several important measures of public policy be snatched from the ancient dust of pigeonholes and the house itself be given the responsibility before the country of voting them up or voting them down? Is he about to announce to the members of congress that they are representatives and that the responsibility of legislation is theirs, not his? Is he about to let loose the responsive forces of popular representation, planned by the fathers, and permit 391 men to attend to the pressing legislation of eighty million people, giving to the tariff bill reasonable time of debate, unrestricted opportunity for amendment and the precious right of specific vote?

Is he on the point of demonstrating to the American people that a revenue measure, such as the tariff, touching vitally the business of the

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